

An Invocation.



THE lonely night is gone:
Beam on us, New Year, from the unfettered dawn;
Brighten the inland vales
And fill the wandering sails.

Come with thy golden notes
Of music from a million feathered throats;
Flash o'er the wind-blown deep;
Send thy sun-couriers where the ice fields sleep
And bid the tollers reap.

Thy steps are on the hills—
Thy voice is heard in the tumultuous rills
That leap into the light;
Thy brow—freed from the thralldom of the night
Is laurel-wreathed and bright.

Come in thy kingliest grace,
With glorious gifts undreamed-of for the race;
And where thy empires bend
There wave the flags of freedom o'er the land
Garlands of liberty!

Scatter thy gifts as broad
As rolls the world beneath the blue of God;
Wide swing thy door
Of plenty, till the wallings of the poor
Ascend to heaven no more.

The olive branch of peace
Wave o'er earth's wars and bid the battle cease;
And where the red swords gleam
Undarkened may the snowy daisies dream—
Unstained the river's stream!

Give light unto the blind:
The scattered sheaves of every harvest bind;
O'er every wayside clod
Lift thou thy scepter—thy commanding rod,
Till altars rise to God.

Sing with thy hills and plains—
Thy winds that kiss the roses of thy rains,
Thy rivers violet-shored,
Thy ancient woodlands of the nymphs adored,
Thy fields with treasure stored—

Freedom's divinest song,
Swept by the thunders of the world along,
Until the unbound sea
Shall have no shore where shines not for the free
The sun of liberty!

—Frank L. Stanton, in Chicago Times-Herald.

The Newburys' New Leaf.

IT WAS the evening of the last day of the year, and Mr. Newbury had taken from his vest pocket a roll of bills, his month's salary, and laid it on the table.

"I think we had better pay up the rent before any of the other bills," he said. "Gray stopped me on the street to-day to speak about it. Says there are three months owing, and he needs the money badly."

"Dear me! that will take nearly half of it," said Mrs. Newbury, with a harassed expression, "and I promised I would pay the coal man and the grocery man, and they need the money, too."

"I wish you could pay for making my dress," said Maud Newbury, in an aggrieved and anxious tone. "I know Mrs. Peters needs the pay, for Nellie Peters comes to school in a dress that is perfectly dreadful, and I feel so mean every time I look at her that I want to go somewhere and hide."

Mrs. Newbury's face flushed.

"I had forgotten that bill," she said, remorsefully. "Mrs. Peters must certainly be paid."

"I should think the milk bill better be paid," spoke up Bob Newbury. "I'm dead tired of telling Mrs. Dale that 'Mother thinks she can pay you something on the bill next week.' She's got so she smiles a queer smile every time I get off that old gag. Guess she thinks next week never comes."

Mrs. Newbury's face flushed more deeply.

"I owe Nora three weeks' wages, too, and she's getting impatient," she said. "There are two pairs of hose and a necktie that I got trusted for at the corner store," said Mr. Newbury.

"And I'm behind with the butcher, and there's a little owing the baker," said Mrs. Newbury.

"For heaven's sake, how much do we owe, and whom don't we owe?" exclaimed Mr. Newbury, wrinkling his forehead in disgust.

"I'll get paper and pencil and reckon it up," said Mrs. Newbury.

After setting down a column of figures, she added them, then, with a deep sigh, passed the paper to her husband.

The amount was exactly the same as the roll of bills on the table.

They looked at each other for a full minute in silence. Then Mrs. Newbury burst forth impetuously:

"I hate this way of living."

"So do I," said Mr. Newbury, "but what can we do about it?"

"I think it's time we did something," said his wife. "I despise and abominate debt more and more every day I live. 'Tis like being in the clutches of one of those horrible marine monsters we read about—the octopus, is it? You get free of two or three of its horrid arms or tentacles, and while you do that the others tighten about you. Then you get out of the grasp of these stronger ones, only to find that the first have got another hold, and that three or four that have been waving about in

the water are beginning to wind around you."

"Just so," assented Mr. Newbury.

"I don't see why we can't be even, just as well as be a month behind all the time," continued Mrs. Newbury.

"But being a month behind, how are we to get even?" queried Mr. Newbury.

"We might pay everything we owe, and then not buy a thing till your next pay day."

"Rather a heroic measure, wouldn't that be?" said Mr. Newbury, doubtfully.

"I'm ready for heroic measures," returned Mrs. Newbury, defiantly.

"Well—I'll agree to it, if you want to try that plan. It is worth some trouble to get out of the grip of the octopus."

"Oh!" cried Maud. "Would you really do it? I think it would be lovely not to be owing anybody."

"'Twould be jolly fun," agreed Rob, with enthusiasm. "Say! let's sign a paper—will you, mother?"

Mrs. Newbury meditated.

"I think," she said, after a pause, "that we could get along for a month. We are quite well supplied with everything."

Maud had been scribbling on the piece of paper which her mother had used for figuring.

"Hear this," she said.

"We, the undersigned, solemnly vow and declare, that during the time to elapse between this last day of December and the last day of January following, we will neither borrow, buy, nor run in debt for any thing or things whatsoever that we can by any possibility exist without."

"Put a date on it," suggested Rob.

Maud followed the suggestion, then looked toward her father.

"Will you sign it?" she asked.

"Oh, yes; I'll sign it," he answered, cheerfully; then he wrote his name with a flourish and handed the paper to Mrs. Newbury.

She hesitated.

"Let us sign it," said Rob, and he and his sister affixed their names.

Then, slowly and deliberately, Mrs. Newbury wrote her name below the others.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Rob, exultantly, snatching the paper and waving it above his head. "I haven't got to go after the milk for a whole month!"

"Oh, dear!" cried Mrs. Newbury. "I forgot about milk. How can we live without that?"

"Use water, of course," said Rob.

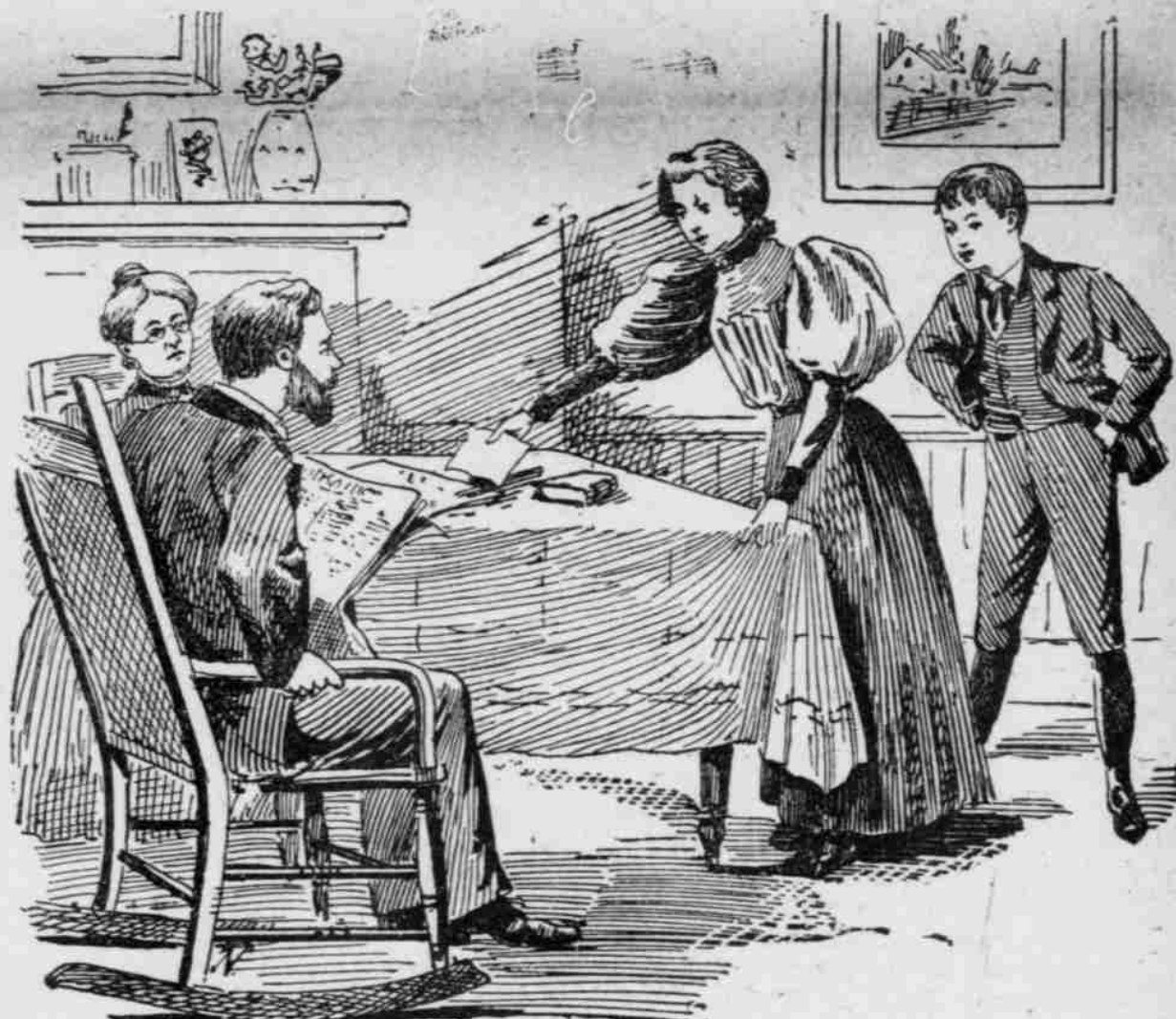
"There's plenty of it—and 'tis paid for," Mr. Newbury laughed.

"We can do without milk that little time, easily enough," said Maud.

"Well," said Mrs. Newbury, resignedly, "if the rest of you can get along, I can."

"What will you do about Nora?" asked Mr. Newbury.

"Oh—Nora!" gasped Mrs. Newbury. "I can't turn her off. Nora never entered my head when I signed that foolish paper."



MAUD LOOKED TOWARD HER FATHER.

"Perhaps she would take a vacation," proposed Maud.

"I will call her in and pay her," said Mr. Newbury, "and see what she says. But what would you do if she should go?" he asked, looking toward his wife with sudden second thought. "It won't pay for you to overwork."

"I'll work every minute before and after school," said Maud, quickly.

"I'll bring in all the wood and coal and kindling, and take care of my own room," volunteered Rob.

"If you both help me half as much as you say you will, I shall get along beautifully," said their mother. "I can put out the washing, and—"

"Oh, can you put out the washing?" laughed Rob, derisively. "Guess you disremember that document you just put your name to, mother."

"Sure enough," returned his mother, a little crestfallen. "So I did."

"We'll wash Saturdays, and I'll do all the scrubbing," said Maud. "I'll venture it won't be any harder work than riding a bicycle."

"I'll turn the wringer and hang out the clothes, if that'll be any accommodation," said Rob, magnanimously.

"Of course it will be a help," cried Maud, warmly, "and you're an angel to offer."

So Nora was called, and greatly to her satisfaction, was paid in full. Then the vacation plan was broached.

"Sure, then, an' I'd be glad to go," exclaimed Nora, her eyes sparkling.

"This a long time I've been wanting to visit me sister in Boston, but feared you'd turn me off if I mentioned it, and I didn't want to lose me place. An' I can go to-morrow, did you say?"

"Yes, you can go to-morrow—if you will be sure to come back at the end of the month."

Nora protested by all the saints that she would return at the appointed time, and then hastened away to make preparation for her journey.

"I'm afraid it is the last we shall see

of her," sighed Mrs. Newbury. "She'll get a situation in Boston, and I don't know when I shall be able to get another girl I like so well."

"I think she will come back," said Maud, hopefully.

"Anyway, let's not cross any bridges till we come to them," said Mr. Newbury.

"It is foolish," she answered, "and I won't worry."

"I declare!" she said a moment later, after a search in her work basket. "I believe I am entirely out of white thread, and I do so want to finish this shirt to-night. Rob, dear, won't you just slip down to the corner and buy me a spool?"

"No, mother, I won't. Dreadfully sorry, all the same," answered Rob, his eyes twinkling.

Mrs. Newbury looked at her usually obliging son in surprise; Mr. Newbury raised his eyes from his newspaper, and Maud frowned disapprovingly. Then the reason for his refusal flashed upon them and they all broke into a laugh. Mrs. Newbury's somewhat rueful.

"Evidently we didn't realize what we were enlisting for," said Mr. Newbury, "but now that we have enlisted, we might as well take things as they come and get what fun we can out of them."

"Now, mother, you can't sew on anything white till the first of February," said Maud.

"No," returned her mother, pensively, "but I have plenty of dark thread. I might buy the sateen for your waist and be making that—"

Then she stopped suddenly, and there was another laugh.

Mrs. Newbury went to rest early that evening, and the others soon followed her example.

The morning was all that a New Year's morning should be, cold, crisp, still and sunshiny. Rob had the extreme felicity of paying Mrs. Dale all that was due her for milk, telling her at the same time that no more would be wanted for a month.

"Folks going away?" queried Mrs. Dale.

"Well, no—not exactly," stammered Rob, and then hastily made his escape.

Mr. Newbury paid the rent and the little account at the corner store; Mrs. Newbury, the butcher, the baker, the coal man and the grocery man, while Maud's heart was rejoiced by paying Mrs. Peters for making her dress.

It thus happened for the first time in years that the Newburys were wholly free from debt, and they confessed to each other at night that this condition of affairs had made them feel at least an inch taller in stature, and sensibly increased the capacity of their lungs.

Mr. Newbury's work was at some distance from his home, and he had been accustomed to take his dinners at an eating house.

"I think you may put me up a lunch to-day," he observed to Mrs. Newbury,

while the washing was rained on soon after being hung out, and later from solidly to the line. But these trials were of comparatively little moment, and for the most part were easily endured.

The third week began well. The hens, of which Mr. Newbury kept 20, responded nobly to the mild weather, and their eggs were a welcome addition to a vegetable diet. But on Wednesday their feed gave out, and they must be supplied from the house. Other things gave out; apples, rolled oats, and worst of all, sugar.

Monday, Mrs. Newbury had announced that the kerosene barrel was empty, and after "his" family made a point of burning but one lamp at a time, and of going to bed early.

Thursday it was decided that still further economy of kerosene would be necessary. So Mrs. Newbury and Maud prepared supper while it was day, and then sat in the dark till Mr. Newbury came. The lamp was then lit, supper was hastily eaten, and while Maud washed and wiped the dishes her mother made everything ready for getting breakfast quickly, for Mr. Newbury had to start away before the sun arose. When Maud had finished the dishes, the light was extinguished, and till bed time the family sat around the sitting-room fire, which shone through the mica in the stove door and made the room quite pleasant, though of course reading, writing or sewing were entirely out of the question. But they could talk, and Maud could play on the piano for the others to sing, and all declared kerosene was an article one could exist very comfortably without, while to grope one's way to bed in the dark was excellent exercise for one's perceptive faculties.

"Well," said Mr. Newbury, at the beginning of the fourth week, "shall we back out?"

"No, don't!" cried Rob. "It's going to be more fun this week than all the rest put together!"

"I don't think it would be right to," said Maud. "We promised."

"It's the hardest on you," said Mrs. Newbury, looking at her husband, "with your long walk and cold dinners."

"You needn't back out on my account," said Mr. Newbury. "I'm doing nicely, thank you!"

"I don't want you to on my account," said Mrs. Newbury.

"Then we'll grit our teeth and keep it up to the bitter end," laughed Mr. Newbury.

This last week opened with a tremendous snowstorm, followed by zero weather, and Mr. Newbury found his three-mile walk no pleasure excursion.

The house supplies began to run low. What Indian meal, macaroni, split peas, rice and potatoes there were had to be given to the hens. But there was no animal food, and the lack of this, together with the cold, had the effect of reducing the number of eggs to two or three a day.

And the butter gave out and the shortening. In fact, there was hardly anything left of a substantial nature excepting flour and canned fruit.

Saturday was rainy, and the soap box was empty, so the washing had to be done with a small remnant of washing powder and dried in the attic.

Sunday was rainy also, and seemed interminable, but the family spirits were good, for now the end was in sight.

The last day of the last week in January came, and Mr. Newbury returned home at night to a frugal supper and three smiling and triumphant individuals.

"Well, we've done it," he exclaimed gleefully, opening his pocketbook and displaying a roll of bills. "Here's a whole month's salary, and we don't owe a cent of it."

"It is worth all it has cost," said Mrs. Newbury, in a tone of conviction, "though the past week has been simply dreadful, and I hope and pray I may never have to live another like it."

"It was like a siege," said Maud, "and I'm proud to think we held out."

"'Twas a jolly lark," said Rob, with a chuckle, "but all the same I'm rather glad it's over, and that we're going to have something to eat. I'm a trifle tired of butterless biscuit, milkless cocoa and sugarless sauce."

"And I suspicion that mother is tired of a Nora-less kitchen," laughed Maud. She had hardly spoken when there was the sound of the outside door being opened and Nora's voice was heard directing some one about her trunk.

Mrs. Newbury drew a long breath.

"It needed but this to make my happiness complete," she murmured.

"Now," she said, when Nora had been greeted and had gone upstairs, "now why not extend our New Year's resolution or one clause of it, rather?"

"For how long?"

"Oh—forever. Let us make it a rule of our lives never to get in debt, but to pay cash for every single thing we buy at the time we buy it."

"Yes," said Maud, "now we're safely out of the clutches of the octopus, do, for pity's sake, let us keep out."

"I really think that is the honest way," said Mr. Newbury. "If we can't pay for a thing, what right have we to buy it? None at all."

So the Newburys turned over a new leaf and paid as they went, and after only a brief trial of this plan they liked it so well that nothing save dire necessity would have induced them to go back to the old, slipshod way. True, they sometimes miscalculated and fell short, and had to practice self-denial for longer or shorter periods, but the discipline was useful and led to a better calculation and a wiser economy.—Elizabeth Robbins, in Ladies' World.

A Probability.

Mrs. Commute—Sarah, what do you suppose causes that disagreeable odor near the meat safe?

Sarah—I don't know, mum, except perhaps some of the sausages we had last week fell down and got hurt.—N. Y. Journal.



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